

**Circle of Fellowship**  
**Monthly Newsletter of the First**  
**Universalist Society of Central**  
**Square, NY**  
**July, 2020**

**Our Mission Statement**

The mission of the First Universalist Society of Central Square is to be a welcoming, diverse congregation which values spiritual growth and service to the local and world community

The First Universalist Society of  
Central Square, New York  
3243 Fulton Street  
(Route 49, near Route 11)

Post Office Box 429

Central Square, New York 13036-  
0429

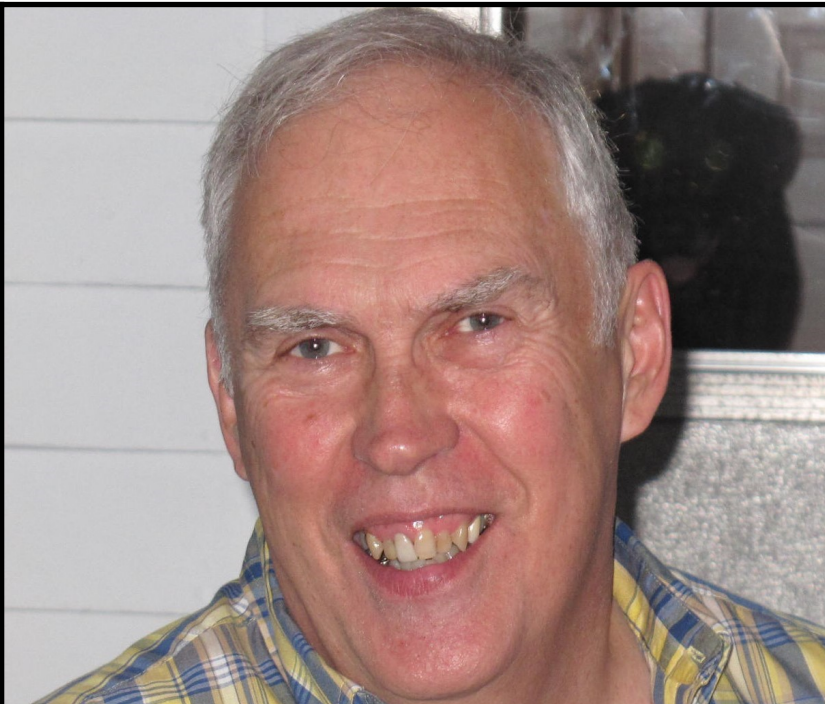
Our Church is Handicapped Accessible

Church Phone: 315-307-3400

E-Mail for Reverend Andrea Abbott:  
[andrea279@verizon.net](mailto:andrea279@verizon.net)

Church website: [centralsquareuu.org](http://centralsquareuu.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/  
UU-Central Square/199139743511564](https://www.facebook.com/pages/UU-Central-Square/199139743511564)



**Paul Riley**

**1948-2020**

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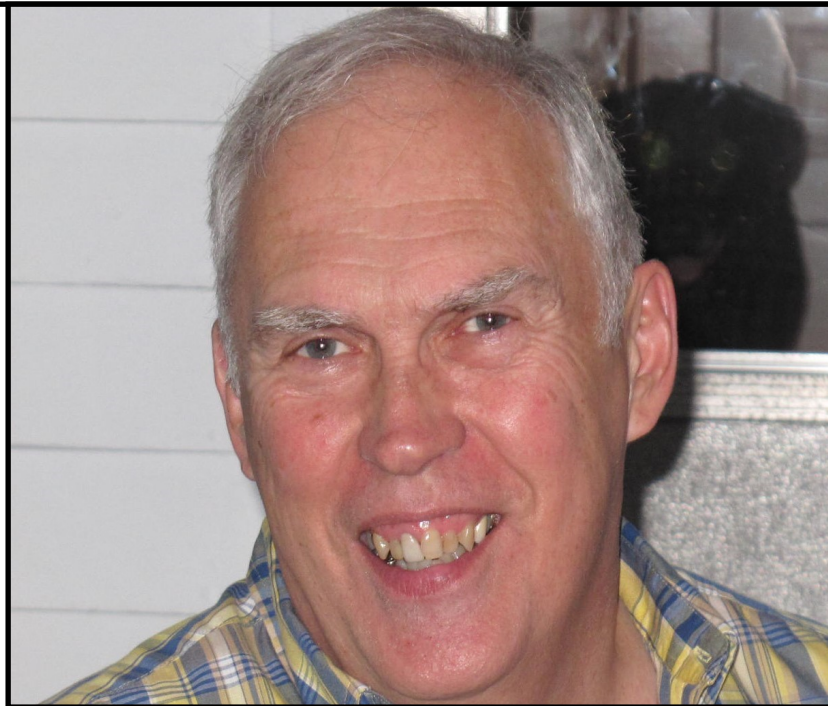
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**Paul Riley: We Will Miss You**

Paul Riley, a great friend, teacher, and performer passed away on June 23, 2020 at Crouse Hospital. His obituary, written by his sister, Maureen, is at this [link](#), Paul belonged to the Camden Area UU Fellowship but was a frequent visitor to First UU Central Square. He often brought his accordion, played at our services and social gatherings and made many friends. Paul was an atheist and found a welcoming home within Unitarian-Universalism. Being an atheist Paul would probably have been skeptical of the term, spiritual. Yet how could we possibly deny that what Paul gave to us through his living and music is a sense of connection that lives and which we could call spiritual. Paul, thank you for all you have given us. AJH (Photo Courtesy of Paul's Friend, George Washburn.)

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**Update on Use of Church Building**

The Executive Board Met via Zoom meeting on July 1 with the main topic of discussion being the use of our building. It was decided that due to current circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, we will not be opening the building in the foreseeable future. The Board recognized that we all miss in person services, seeing each other in person and our beautiful building but also agreed that it is just not safe to return to using our building at this time.

We will continue to meet via Zoom for services, meetings, and social gatherings. However, realizing that circumstances do change quickly, the Board will be meeting again in July to develop a plan for limited special uses of the building such as for funerals or weddings following NY law and CDC guidelines. This use would be considered only for members of the church by the Board on a case by case basis.

Ellen LaPine  
Board President

**Notable Pieces of Interest**

I listened this morning to the recitation by James Earl Jones of the speech by Frederick Douglass given on July 5th, 1852. Click on this [link](#). Please listen and share with others. I don't know if there is anything else I can say about this extraordinary speech which is still relevant in these times. AJH

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**Ministerial Musings**

July, 2020

Here in our garden, one perfect day succeeds another, with cloudless (and almost contrail-less) skies. The different phases of the summer are marked by the changes in the flowers, as the early spring flowers wither and the summer blooms come into their own. This is a different summer for all of us. I never thought our church would be closed this long or that there would be no end in sight. Cracks in social distancing are beginning to appear as people's patience wears thin for this invisible war. The perfect summer weather almost seems to mock us as people are unable to participate in their favorite summer recreations. And yet, for any thoughtful person, these measures are essential to keep everyone safe. Every place that has relaxed restrictions has seen a rise in CORONA virus cases. We, too, do our part with our patience. There are dangers in isolation, however, that we must overcome, just as we have struggled to maintain these necessary restrictions. This pandemic has proven the need humans have for real contact. Even Zoom, helpful though it has been, does not substitute for casual conversation. Isolation breeds its own problems. Hurts and resentments and misunderstandings that could be resolved by human contact can fester. In this strange war, the invisible enemy is not just a microbe; it is also our own minds. We need to open our minds to the sunshine of optimism. We need to think well of each other. We need to think well of the people we are protecting by our continuing isolation. We need to be mindful, mindful, mindful. Let's use our best resources, ourselves, to continue on the path to a better life ahead.

-Andrea Abbott

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### Green Minute Regulatory Relief in the US and Abroad for Polluting Industries

In the online magazine *YaleEnvironment360* Beth Gardiner has published an article about the ways big industry is using the pandemic to lobby for relaxed regulations and governmental monetary relief in both the US and in other countries. You can find the article at <https://e360.yale.edu/features/in-pandemic-recovery-efforts-polluting-industries-are-winning-big>

Ms. Gardiner writes that according to *Influence Map*, a London based non-profit that monitors corporate influence on climate policy, oil and gas interests have been especially quick to adapt their expansive lobbying work to the new circumstances. They say that in the United States, those efforts have been rewarded with access to billions of dollars in public pandemic recovery funds, in the form of tax breaks, loans, and waivers of the fees normally charged for extracting resources on public lands. The article goes on to say that since Covid-19 hit, U.S. officials have finalized or advanced proposals to ease restrictions on other industries including logging, grazing, pipeline safety, and the disposal of some radioactive waste. She says that taxes have been another focus for oil and gas companies and that *Bloomberg News* estimates that at least 37 oil companies have claimed \$1.9 billion in CARES Act funds.

The plastics industry has also received a boost with states like New York suspending the start of their single use bag bans. The Trump administration has been using the pandemic as a rationale for advancing its anti-regulatory agenda including all but suspending enforcement of air and water pollution rules; revising the Clean Water Act rules to make it harder for states to block energy projects; and waving the Endangered Species Act and other requirements for environmental review on new mines, pipelines, highways, and other infrastructure. According to journalist Amy Westervelt who also hosts the podcast *Drilled*, “It just really ramped up in early March, Pipeline projects that had been super-controversial were getting rapid-fire permits, and other long-standing plans were fast-tracked. It was so many things, all the time. That was shocking to me — just the volume.” She has cataloged more than 80 recent developments including a scailing back of pipeline safety rules, as well as approvals for an 800 mile gas pipeline on Alaska’s North Slope and a drilling project at the Carrizo Plain National Monument, a California grassland.

The article claims that the bonanza has been particularly rich in the U.S. but also points out that worldwide polluters are also taking advantage of the times. As example, she says that coal is getting a government-sponsored boost in China and South Korea. At the start of the year about 100 gigawatts (GW) of coal capacity were under construction in China which is about 190 coal fired plants, By the end of May officials announced or issued permits for an additional 40 GW in additional plants and in March alone, officials gave out more permits for these plants than in all of 2019.

Sadly, she also points to Brazil whose top environment official was caught on video describing the pandemic as a good time to “push through and change all the rules” while the media “are only talking about Covid.” She claims Brazil is looking the other way while illegal loggers, miners, and ranchers step up their aggressive exploitation of the Amazon rainforest. Research group IPAM Amazonia claims that deforestation in the Amazon has increased by 55% over the first four months of 2020 compared to last year.

I encourage you to check out the article and the other sources she references within the article.

Ellen LaPine  
Social Justice Committee

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**Church Events Calendar**

If you need to speak to the Reverend Andrea Abbott, she can be reached at:

(315) 8571086 or at [andrea279@verizon.net](mailto:andrea279@verizon.net)

**6/29: Online Discussion Course on Sustainable Living**

What: Discussion Course on Sustainable Living

When: Mondays, June 29 to August 17, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Where: Online through First Universalist Society of Central Square ([www.centralsquareuu.org](http://www.centralsquareuu.org))

Cost: Free

**SUNDAY SERVICES:** On Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/902138902>

**Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup>:** The Reverend David Weissbard will speak to us via Zoom at 10:25. The title of Dave’s sermon is, **"Is You Got Good Religion?"** It is a response to a sermon I heard several years ago at the founding conference [and, I believe final gathering] of the Progressive Religious Partnership. Be that as it may, I am sympathetic to those who believe that religion has often been [and in many cases still is] a blight on humankind. But not always. I do believe Unitarian Universalism can make a positive contribution to the lives of some [maybe not all] of us.

**Sunday, July 12<sup>th</sup>:** The Reverend Andrea Abbott. **“Why We Have a Church”**

**Sunday, July 19<sup>th</sup> :** The Reverend Bud Adams

**Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup>:** The Reverend Andrea Abbott

**PURE WATER FOR THE WORLD** Set up a jar in your home for the loose change you normally give during the offertory for Pure Water for the World's important work and then when we are all back together you can put the contents of the jar in the collection plate.

**SAVE THE DATE:**

7/8 First UU Consider at 7:00

**7/17 BLOOD DRIVE**

July 17 – 1:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Our Red Cross Blood Drive will be at the First Baptist Church.

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**Red Cross Blood Drive**  
**Friday July 17 15th 1:30 – 6:30 p.m.**  
**Different Location – Baptist Church**

The Red Cross says there is still an ongoing urgent need for people to give blood. You can donate blood at our Red Cross blood drive from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Friday, July 17th. However, due to social distancing protocols, this drive will be held at the Baptist Church across the street at 701 Main Street. It is highly encouraged that you schedule an appointment because in an effort to control the number of people in the building at one time, walk-ins may not be allowed. You can schedule an appointment by visiting [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS.

If you can help by volunteering at the blood drive please contact me at [dart-frog7777@aol.com](mailto:dart-frog7777@aol.com).

Thank you.

Ellen LaPine  
Social Justice Committee